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4-H CLUB WORK AND THE COMMUNITY

A radio talk by Gertrude L. Warren, Extension Service, delivered through Station WRC and 40 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Saturday, March 1, 1930.

Every one of us thrills to the words of our 4-H Plowing Song --

"Sons of the soil are we
Turning our sods
Asking no odds
Where is a life so free!"

That to me and to many of you etches the picture of the sturdy independence and the outdoor life of farm-reared young folks. It is that feeling of identity of our community life with the glories of the country side which binds us to our own communities. In order that such a feeling toward community life in the open country may be continued here in America, all of us, young and old, are called upon to merge our sturdy independence in united effort for the upbuilding of every farming community. Therefore, it is gratifying to note the many community activities that you boys and girls are already undertaking in your 4-H clubs. The other day I made a list of such activities from the annual reports. Here are a few of the things which different 4-H clubs did during 1929:

Planted shrubbery and flowers about the local school yards, town halls and roadsides; produced and sold disease-free seed at reasonable prices; made children's clothes for 200 needy families; provided hot lunches for local schools; established and equipped rest rooms; helped to promote county-wide soil and livestock campaigns; established community and county 4-H club fairs; built cottages for 4-H club camps; and, developed good, wholesome dramatics as well as other recreation for community programs.

Because all of you have probably had a part in at least one such club activity, I know that you will be interested in hearing about some new ones:

In Clarksburg, Massachusetts, a 4-H food club raised enough money to pay the dentistry work for those school children who could not otherwise have such service.

In California, 4-H clubs are reporting fires and learning to use fire-fighting equipment -- thus becoming a responsible part in the California rural fire protection system.

In Redwood County, Minnesota, the 4-H clubs have united

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in establishing an arboretum in which are being planted trees and shrubs native to southwestern Minnesota, while in Ely, Minnesota, a 4-H club is establishing a town forest.

Parallel with this work, in Wisconsin 4-H clubs are establishing school forests:

Can you picture what such 4-H club work will mean to a community twenty years hence?

It is always gratifying to note how individual club members serve. Percy Anderson of Florence County, South Carolina, in 1927 placed registered hogs on 3 different farms, in 1928 on 16 and in 1929 on 22 different farms. Moreover, 26 other club boys are now following Percy Anderson's plan, having distributed already in addition, 100 registered hogs. All these sound community activities are increasing in no small degree the value of farm land as well as the desirability of owning homes in such progressive communities. There are other values also. In every case they imply that the 4-H club members participating have learned how to cooperate. Because of such evidences, all leaders of farm movement believe strongly that, thru training in cooperation as provided in 4-H club work, the cooperative movement in the United States will succeed in a large way.

We feel sure that each of you 4-H club boys and girls are striving hard to learn how to work with your fellow club members for the good of all. Such ability begets the greatest service. We like to hear it said that you club boys and girls may be depended upon to be loyal to your group, to assume a share of responsibility, to follow a leader as well as to lead sometimes yourself, and to give up selfish desires for the good of all! Most satisfying of all is the fact that such qualities can be developed by every 4-H club member. 4-H club work provides splendid opportunities for training in cooperation such as in conducting well-organized 4-H club meetings, planning through your club committees 4-H club programs for the year and presenting what you have learned to the community thru your team demonstration work. Nor should we fail to mention the important part each of you boys and girls play when you are appointed as a delegate to represent your 4-H club in a county or state 4-H club organization. The more each of you do as a part of well organized club work, the better will you be able to work with others for the good of your own communities as well as for yourselves. My best wishes are that to each of you, as 4-H club boys and girls, may come the joy of having had a genuine part in building up your own community and in giving to it a name that stands for the best things in life. No greater service to a community can you render.